

Our last quarter at Optimal has been filled with growth-in staff, expertise, and standards. In this issue, you'll read about the many accomplishments of our research staff in the form of published reports and peer acknowledgement as subject matter experts. We also want to share new methodologies and standards we are implementing at Optimal. In the business realm, we are being recognized for our success in our growth by Inc. magazine. It is our ideology that growth is an integral part in reaching our goals of providing quality research and products to our clients, and the



community.

Mark D. Turner, Ph.D., President and CEO
Tracye Turner, Vice President

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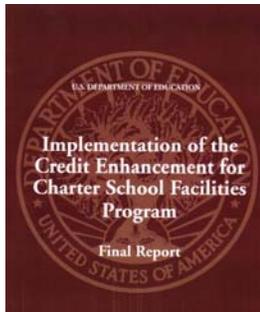
Questions or Comments?

Contact us for more information:

301-306-1170 or

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SPOTLIGHT



Charter School Credit Enhancement Report Released

The U.S. Department of Education released the final report of the *Implementation Study of the Credit Enhancement for Charter School Facilities Program* developed by Optimal Solutions Group.

Optimal conducted the study under a contract with the Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development of the U.S. Department of Education.

This final report found that many charter schools are unable to qualify for loans that could be used for facilities-related purposes lenders perceive them to be too great a risk. The credit enhancements funded by the program reduce lender's exposure to losses and improved charter school's access to capital. According to representatives of Grantees, commercial lenders, investment banks, and rating agencies, many schools would not have received facility loans at any price prior to the implementation of the program because lenders assessed that some charter schools were prohibitively high-risk borrowers. With the credit enhancements made available by the Program, assisted schools received loans with rates and terms that were better than would otherwise be available.

Read more about the [Credit Enhancement Report](#).

HUD's Moving to Work Conference Brings Agencies Together to Discuss Key Public Housing Issues

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) held its 2008 Moving to Work (MTW) Conference to provide a forum for the MTW public housing agencies (PHAs), HUD staff, and industry representatives to discuss a host of critical issues. Among these were challenges associated with the operational shift to the asset management model, rent reform ideas and experiences, and HUD reporting requirements.

Under contract with HUD's Office of Public and Indian Housing, Optimal provides on-going technical assistance to MTW PHAs as they plan and execute MTW activities in these topical areas. Optimal also supports HUD's management of the Demonstration by monitoring the execution and impacts of each MTW PHA's activities, as well as their compliance with the agency's MTW agreement with HUD. Optimal is preparing to enter into its third year providing these critical services to the Department.

Learn more about the outcomes of the [MTW Conference](#).

Dr. Fashola Presents at National Teachers Conference

In July, Toks Fashola, Ph.D., led a workshop during the 2008 Education Research and Dissemination conference at the American Federation of Teachers' Convention in Chicago. The workshop focused on student success and developing quality professional development programming for union leaders, coordinators, and educators.

Dr. Fashola also presented her research on alternative and nontraditional interventions for African American males at a session entitled, *Educating African*

American Males, at the New York University Metropolitan Center for Urban Education's annual summer institute, "Building Equitable and Culturally Responsive School Systems."

Dr. Fashola will be presenting at the upcoming [New York State School Board Association Convention](#).

Optimal Staff Visit Ghana

President and CEO Mark Turner, Ph.D., and Christabel Dadzie, M.I.A., travelled to Ghana for several business development meetings with high-level government officials in Ghana's Health, Education, and Information Ministries, and the U.S. State Department-funded Millennium Development Authority-Ghana.

Dr. Turner and Ms. Dadzie also met with officials from Action AID Ghana, Millennium Development Agency of Ghana (part of the George Bush Millennium Challenge Corporation initiative), and the Ghana Chamber of Mines. Optimal will pursue research opportunities with these organizations and the Ministry of Information and looks forward to developing more international business in the future.

Optimal Professional Development

HIPAA Compliancy

Optimal has made significant progress in the management of HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) compliancy. This effort is being led by Data Security Officer Andrew Gendreau and includes an overhaul of Optimal's policy and procedures involving sensitive data, developing a culture of respect for data security, and increasing technical and physical security of data.

SAS Certifications

Employee professional and career development is one of the top priorities for Optimal. Optimal fosters professional growth through various certification trainings, professional development seminars, and employee mentorship initiatives. Adam Bickford, Ph.D., Grace Hong, Ph.D., and Evan Olson, M.A., have obtained their SAS certification through a tutorial and testing program supported by Optimal. SAS is a leading business analytics software with broad applications in all fields of academic and public policy research.

Introducing Optiwiki

Optimal has recently launched Optiwiki, a dynamic, secure online wiki for Optimal employees that will facilitate information sharing and project collaboration. Utilizing the latest Web 2.0 technology, the wiki is being used as a platform to house evolving company documents and seamlessly share the latest work within project teams. Optimal will expand the use of

wiki technology to more projects in the near future.

OPTIMAL NEWS

Optimal Recognized on Inc.'s List of Fastest Growing Private Companies

[Optimal](#) has been named #154 on the Inc. 5000 Fastest Growing Private Companies in America. Optimal will participate in the 27th Annual Inc. 5000 Conference and Awards Ceremony on September 18-20th at the new Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in National Harbor, Maryland.

Learn more about the [Inc. 5000 and Conference](#).

New Optimal Staff

Optimal has recently added a number of staff to the research and administrative departments, including:

[Jacqueline Slahor](#), Human Resource Director;
[Maria Goebert](#), Senior Research Associate;
[Marshall Jackson](#), Senior Information Technology Manager;
[Kathryn Richter](#), Research Analyst II (HPRC);
[Lindsey Cramer](#), Research Analyst I (WDSRPC);
[Theodore Hickey](#), Research Analyst I (ERC/HPRC);
[Katlo Manthe](#), Research Analyst I (HPRC);
[Joseph Parilla](#), Research Analyst I (HEDTRC);
[Ben Spears](#), Research Analyst I (ERC);
[Kwame Bonnie](#), Management Assistant; and
[Cordain Lucas](#), Information Technology Specialist.

Green Matters New Eco-Friendly Products

Optimal is dedicated to the resources conservation movement. We inspire our clients to use eco-friendly products, and techniques for projects such as using recycled-material promotional items for conferences. In addition to recycling paper, glass, plastic and aluminum, internally we use 30% recycled paper for our everyday copy needs. Do your share in making our world greener by exchanging potentially harmful products with eco-friendly alternatives that benefit our environment.

From bamboo utensils to solar panel energy for your home, learn more about the trends in eco-friendly products at www.evo.com.